

REMARKS

Applicant has amended the claims 14, 16, 17, 18, 29 and 31 through 34, added new claims 36 through 47 and canceled the claim 13, 19 through 28, 30 and 35 without prejudice. Applicant respectfully submits that these amendments to the claims are supported by the application as originally filed and do not contain any new matter (see paragraphs [0006], [0020], [0028], [0029], [0030], [0033], [0034] and [0036] to [0037] of U.S. Publication No. 2006/0150436 A1). In addition, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as amended would not be properly rejectable based upon the art of record in the parent application for the reasons set forth below.

The new claim 36 incorporates the following in order to make clear the difference with Tada et al.

- The material storage processing tank is formed by integrally connecting the hopper chamber and the heating and drying chamber and has an airtight means.
- The hopper chamber is designed to be larger in capacity than the heating and drying chamber.

Thus, according to the present invention, the powdered or granular material stored in the material storage processing tank is heated and dried in the lower heating and drying chamber under depressurized condition and the powdered or granular material in the upper hopper chamber falls by gravity to be fed into the heating and drying chamber accompanied by the discharge through the heating and drying chamber.

Thereby, all of the powdered or granular material stored in the material storage processing tank is not heated and dried wastefully. When the processing ability of the processing apparatus to which the heated and dried powdered or granular material is supplied is relatively small, the powdered or granular material which meets the processing ability can be supplied after heated and dried in the heating and drying chamber, so that waste energy can be reduced and the heater is not required to be enlarged.

Further, the charging operation of the powdered or granular material into the material storage processing tank can be reduced, thereby enabling to heat and dry the powdered or granular material in the heating and drying chamber more efficiently. Namely, in the prior depressurized drying hopper, the depressurized condition in the drying hopper is broken when

the material is discharged or charged and the hopper is required to be returned to a depressurized condition each time. However, according to the present invention, discharge of the material from the heating and drying chamber and supply of the material from the hopper chamber to the heating and drying chamber are synchronized, so that breakage of depressurized condition can be reduced and the efficiency of heating and drying can be improved.

The claims further claim that the feeder unit is connected to a transportation line and a circulation line, each of the lines having an electromagnetic valve and being connected to a compression air supply source, respectively, the feeder unit is further connected to a pneumatic transportation pipe for supplying the powdered or granular material discharged through the discharge port to a processing apparatus of powdered or granular material, corresponding to the transportation line, whereas the feeder unit is further connected to a circulation pipe for supplying the powdered or granular material discharged through the discharge port to the upper part in the hopper chamber, corresponding to the circulation line, and the powdered or granular material discharged through the discharge port is capable of being selectively supplied in the pneumatic transportation pipe or the circulation pipe by selectively controlling the open and close operation of the electromagnetic valve provided at the transportation line and the circulation line.

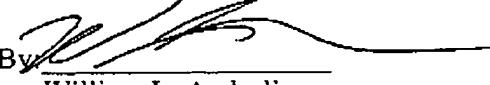
The claims also claim that the electromagnetic valve provided for the purge line is further provided as a carrier gas introduction means and the compressed air as a carrier gas is introduced in the material storage processing tank from the purge line when the electromagnetic valve is opened.

Based upon the above, Applicant respectfully submits that these features and objects of Applicant's invention are not shown or suggested by Tada et al., Evans, JP 11291289, Saeman and Wear et al. taken singly or in combination. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the amended claims are not anticipated by nor obvious over the art cited by the Examiner.

In view of the above, therefore, it is respectfully requested that this amendment be entered as part of the Request for Continued Examination, favorably considered and the case passed to issue.

Please charge any additional costs incurred by or in order to implement this
Amendment or required by any requests for extensions of time to QUINN EMANUEL
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 50-4367.

Respectfully submitted,

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